

Luke 15:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Analysis

The Pharisees complain: 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them' (ὅτι Οὗτος ἀμαρτωλὸνς προσδέχεται καὶ συνεσθίει αὐτοῖς). The verb 'prosdechomai' (προσδέχεται, receiveth) means to welcome or accept, while 'synesthiō' (συνεσθίει, eateth with) indicates table fellowship—the most intimate social interaction. In Jewish culture, sharing meals implied acceptance, approval, even covenant relationship. The Pharisees' criticism reflects their theology: association with sinners brings defilement. Jesus' practice demonstrates gospel truth: He enters sinners' brokenness to bring transformation, not contamination. His holiness heals rather than being compromised by contact with sin.

Historical Context

Pharisaic purity regulations extended biblical laws into elaborate oral traditions. They maintained separation from the *am ha-aretz* (people of the land) who did not observe these traditions strictly. Table fellowship was especially sensitive—sharing food with the unclean made one unclean. Jesus' behavior threatened this entire system, suggesting that God's grace operates differently than their merit-based righteousness. The three parables that follow (lost sheep, lost coin, lost son) defend Jesus' practice by revealing God's heart—He actively seeks and joyfully receives repentant sinners.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' table fellowship with sinners model the gospel principle that Christ enters our mess to save us?
2. What contemporary forms of Pharisaic separation might prevent Christians from effectively reaching lost people?

Interlinear Text

καὶ διεγόγγυζον οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς

And **murmured** **the Pharisees** **And** **scribes**

G2532

G1234

G3588

the Pharisees

G2532

G3588

scribes

G1122

λέγοντες ὅτι Οὗτος ἀμαρτωλοὺς προσδέχεται καὶ

saying **This man** **receiveth** **And**

G3004

G3754

G3778

sinners

G268

G4327

G2532

συνεσθίει αὐτοῖς

eateth **with them**

G4906

G846

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 9:11 (Resurrection): And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

Luke 19:7 (Sin): And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

Luke 7:39 (Resurrection): Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

Luke 5:30 (Resurrection): But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Acts 11:3 (Parallel theme): Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Luke 7:34 (Sin): The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

Galatians 2:12 (Parallel theme): For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.